

Museum ArtiFACTS

Volume 4, Issue 1

Spring 2004

Center for US War Veterans' Oral Histories

Since the Center for U.S. War Veterans' Oral Histories began in the summer of 2001, approximately 200 honored veterans have helped to preserve this country's history by sharing their wartime experiences during a videotaped interview. The number includes veterans who served during WWII, the Korean War, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf and Bosnia.

The Center holds the proud distinction of being a partner of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in their Veterans' History Project. This partnership allows researchers worldwide to access the Center's collection of oral histories. Through this collaboration the staff was contacted this past summer by a researcher with the U.S. Naval Historical Center who was interested in learning about George Tkacs, one of the Center's World War II Navy veterans from the European Theater of Operations.

Because not all veterans are able to make the drive to Sea Girt, the staff has begun to take the project on the road. For example, a number of day trips were recently made to interview veterans from the South Jersey Chapter of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. Four days were scheduled in September and October of 2003 to conduct these interviews at the Cape

May Courthouse Armory.

One of the interviews was that of Ted Kerwood, a U.S. Army 82nd Airborne veteran who was dropped behind enemy lines four hours before the Normandy invasion. Ted stated that they were always dropped into enemy territory, where they depended

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on their ground troops to catch up to them. No luxury of heavy artillery was around to support these jumpers. His first combat jump was in Sicily, where he landed on top of an enemy pillbox and was eventually wounded by an Italian wooden bullet. On his jump into Holland during Operation Market Garden, Ted's parachute canopy was penetrated by small arms fire. Ted earned a Silver Star medal for single-handedly destroying a

bridge as the Germans raced to take it during the Battle of the Bulge.

The team has traveled to interview veterans from the Paramus VA home. They have also made home visits to local veterans who could not come to the museum. More trips like these will be planned in the future.

The Center's newest partnership is with the 4-H Club of Monmouth County. The kickoff for this venture was held on October 25, 2003. Approximately ten young and enthusiastic 4-H'ers were trained by staff member Carol Fowler on the Veterans' History Project and how to conduct an oral history interview. Also in attendance were veterans from Freehold VFW Post 4374, who shared their military experiences with the students. The students were paired with a veteran from Post 4374. The interviews were successfully conducted throughout December of 2003 and January of 2004.

One young interviewer, Bryce Uzolino, an 11 year old student from Howell Township wrote about the experience: "I definitely learned a lot. It was really fun interviewing Walter. I thought it was cool that he was the first enlisted person to board the USS Roy O. Hale, and that his second ship, the USS

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Volunteer Spotlight: Leo Fraser

It is a genuine pleasure to meet and host the many visitors that come to the NGMMNJ Annex at the War Memorial in Trenton. One of the Volunteer Hosts we have is Leo Fraser. A proud member of the Tin Can Sailors of New Jersey, Leo adds reality to history as he speaks of the USS Clarence K. Bronson exhibit.

In 1944 Leo was serving his country as a 19 year old signalman aboard the Bronson, DD668. He was there when

the Bronson's crew rescued Ensign George Bush and his crew after their Avenger TBM went down in the Pacific. This event would have been forgotten if not for the fact that it occurred just as the Battle of the Philippine Sea began. This increased battle activity delayed for several days the return of the downed pilots to their carrier. During the prolonged time they were on board, this particular crew became relatively more visible to

the sailors than most other pilots and airmen that were rescued by the Bronson; and thus this personal encounter with the future 41st President of the United States remains far more memorable.

The C. K. Bronson exhibit, put together by Leo over two years, includes a scale model of the destroyer and replicas of two Japanese planes (a Japanese Betty and a Japanese Zero) as well as a Grumman fighter bomber (the US Hellcat.) Alongside the Bronson exhibit is a signal light identical to that used by Signalman Fraser

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Letter From the President

A Happy New Year 2004 to all of our readers and members. I would like to thank the board and trustees for their diligence and hard work during the past year. Many meetings were held to formulate and produce a Letter of Agreement and to update the Long Range Plan for the Foundation, DMAVA, and the future of the state's premier military museum system.

I would also like to thank Jack Petrosilli for his year as treasurer and welcome Col (Ret) John Promaulayko who stepped up to take this position. This organization has a group of members who stand out in their volunteerism and support for our museum system. There are too many to mention, however they know who they are. THANK YOU.

Congratulations to Col (Ret) Rudy Saulter, Lt Col (Ret) Charles McKinstry, Lt Col (Ret) Edward Sain, CSM (Ret) Thomas Walter and Mr. Robert

Dennin on their election to the Board of Trustees. Also BG William Marshall for stepping in to finish out the term for CSM (Ret) Lum Harris.

This upcoming year I have added new ex-officio members to the board. I believe that our fraternal-military organizations are and integral part in helping and formulating the support and liaison for the museum. Presently we have 112th FA, 3/113th FA, 113th, INF, 117th Cav and Essex Troop associations. I still have a few more to get on board.

Committees have been consolidated from the existing 12 to 6 and in 2004 we will be working on getting them to re-establish task assignments, formulate and organize their efforts for success in their respective arenas and towards increasing our membership, and potential fundraising initiatives. Individual membership is the backbone to our success.

- COL Leonard Lutsky, President

Volunteers Equal Success

In 1998 the Field Artillery Annex at the Lawrenceville Annex became part of the National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey. The Annex is dedicated to the collection, preservation and display of military artifacts with historical significance to the New Jersey Army National Guard, especially the field artillery.

The armory built in the 1920s for the 112th FA Regiment, sits on 74 acres, shared with the NJ Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, NJ Homeland Defense Center and Class IX facility. The armory itself houses the 50th Bde HQ, B/112th FA Bn, Co D/50th MSB, 112th FA Honorary Regimental Staff and the 112th FA Association.

The Annex was developed by national guard retirees, most of whom are members of the 112th FA Association or the General James A. Garfield Camp No.4, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. They are the core of the volunteers that give of their time and energy every Tuesday and Friday.

The curator is COL (Ret) Don Kale assisted by COL (Ret) Jon Gribbon. Others are CW4 (Ret) John Monroe, LTC (Ret) Gary Ireland, LTC (Ret) Ed

Gore, LTC (Ret) James Crocetti, MSG (Ret) Lyn Steinman, SGM (Ret) Harry Houghton, SFC (Ret) Art Pierce, SGM (Ret) John Bodine, Mrs. Sylvia Carroll and Robert Nochtan. CSM (Ret) Rich LaRocca and CSM (Ret) Tom Walter join the Annex every Friday and work at Sea Girt on Tuesdays.

The Cannon Shop Crew, led by MSG (Ret) David Morton, refurbish vehicles that are displayed outside the armory on concrete pads. They strive for authenticity, down to the proper paint color and assembly line quality. The rest of the crew is SFC (Ret) Lew Errico, 1SG (Ret) David Horner, SGM (Ret) James Carroll (Sylvia's husband), CSM (Ret) John Nabinger, SFC (Ret) Richard Mauger, CPT (Ret) William Hutchinson, Gary Ireland and the only marine, Philip Gentile.

The Cannon Shop Crew just completed the restoration of a 5 ton wrecker, built in 1965, now looking like it just came off the assembly line. Over the past three years the crew has restored six track vehicles, three heavy towed guns, two jeeps and one mule. Also, they maintain the 105mm howitzer salute weapons used for

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ceremonies. Future restoration projects include and Honest John rocket and launcher, Nike Ajax and Hercules missile, Cobra helicopter, two Russian artillery weapons and some wheeled vehicles.

The Civil War Crew is at the armory every Tuesday and is led by historians Joe Seliga and Dan George. They are assisted by Fred Daubert, Stan Saperstein, Bill Ford and Stuart Foulks.

The storage garage will be a museum spring project with cleaning and repair so that soft vehicles can be displayed and stored. Other future projects include construction of water-proof signs for the outside static displays and completion of two galleries within the armory.

The Annex is open for tours upon request and whenever activities are taking place within the armory. Call 600-530-6802 to request a tour of the Annex. You will be sure to meet a group of multi talented, hard working, fun loving volunteers who make the Annex a success.

- COL (Ret) Donald Kale

Oral Histories

(Continued from page 1)

Noa, picked up the Friendship Seven. I hope I can have the chance to interview another veteran." Bryce and his brother Bobby interviewed Walter Kowalsky, a Navy sonar man during WWII. Bobby added, "Everything I learned during Walter's interview will really help me in history class when we study World War II."

A number of veterans who have participated in the program are also responsible for donating hundreds of artifacts to the museum. Examples include the donations of Anna Hoffman, a member of the Women's Army Corps during WWII. Over the years Anna gathered a large collection of memorabilia; including letters, photographs, uniforms and other items of interest from female veterans across the country. Many of these donations can be seen in the new "Women in the Military" display located in the main gallery of the museum.

Twice a year interviewed veterans are invited back for a luncheon in honor dedication in sharing their experiences with the Center. At these events each veteran is presented with a videotape copy of their interview as well as a certificate of appreciation. The luncheons are always a delightful afternoon, both for the veteran and the museum staff. The next luncheon will in on April 27th of this year.

There are 19 million war veterans alive in the United States today, but every day we lose close to 2,000 of them. Although already three years old, the Center for U.S. War Veterans' Oral Histories has only begun to preserve the treasured stories of our nation's veterans. For more information on the program, or to view one of the many histories housed at the museum, please contact a member of the Center for US War Veterans' Oral History staff at 732-974-5966.

- Michelle Carrara & Carol Fowler

In the next issue:

- Heritage of the Essex Troop
- New Exhibits
 - War Memorial
 - Mobile Museum
 - Sea Girt

New Jersey Troops Mobilized

With the current state of world affairs, the New Jersey National Guard in beginning to play a part in the events. The Department of the Army and National Guard Bureau have projected that before the end of 2004 there is a possibility that up to 30% of New Jersey Army and Air personnel will be deployed somewhere in the world.

Presently, the 253rd Transportation Company of Cape May Courthouse and B/112th Field Artillery of Toms River have been mobilized in support

of operation Iraqi Freedom. The 253rd has been mobilized since February 2003.

As these troops deploy please contact Family Assistance Centers at the armories too see what you can do to help. Call 1-888-859-0352 to listen to a complete listing of Army and Air Family Assistance Center locations.

Please do not send chocolate, as it will be melted by the time of delivery. Delivery time is approximately three weeks after mailing.

- CW4 Judith McCabe

Send A Care Package

Contact your local Family Assistance Center to find out how to send a care package.

Items to include:

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| • Cookies/brownies | • Newspaper subscriptions | • Stamps |
| • Newspaper clippings | • Pictures | • Playing cards |
| • Cartoon/joke books | • Puzzle books/puzzles | • Gum |
| • Self addressed envelopes | • Aspirin | • 100 minute Pre-paid phone cards |
| • Disposable razors/razor blades | • Health food | • Hand held games |
| • Recorded letter | • Shoe insole cushions | • Batteries |
| • Snack food | • Dry soup mixes | • Hand lotion |
| • Magazines subscriptions | • Nuts | • Lip balm |
| | • Sewing kit | • Travel alarm |
| | • Powdered beverages | • Specialty teas |
| | • Jerky | • Greeting cards for his/her family |
| | | • DO NOT SEND CHOCOLATE |

Leo Fraser

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during his service on the Bronson.

When Leo hosts the school tours that visit the War Memorial, he offers to signal, in Morse code, the individual letters of student's names. The pride Leo takes in his U. S. Navy service is evident to anyone listening to him. Fortunately, Leo has also taken part in the Veteran's History Project. In this he has recounted many of his experiences for future generations to view and more accurately learn about wartime experiences.

The C. K. Bronson display was do-

nated to the National Guard Militia Museum on behalf of the Fraser/Ryerson families, former Bronson crewmates and members of Tin Can Sailors, Inc. of New Jersey. After several years at the Sea Girt museum, it has been at the War Memorial for the last two years.

Groups may arrange for a tour of the NGMMNJ Annex and the War Memorial building by calling 609-999-0000. The display room is also open before Patriot Theatre performances and during intermission.

- MAJ (Ret) Raymond Rauanheimo

NATIONAL GUARD MILITIA MUSEUM OF NEW JERSEY

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Museum Artifacts

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An ArtiFACT...The New Jersey Guardsman, May 1923

WAR DEPARTMENT MILITIA
BUREAU, Washington, April 14, 1923

Subject: Allowance of horses for training purposes during fiscal year 1924.

1. Plans are being made by the War Department to turn over to the National Guard 2445 Regular Army horses after July 1, 1923. This number will not be sufficient to furnish all units the number of animals authorized.

2. In order that as many units as possible will have horses available for training purposes the following allowances to the units specified will be authorized. No mules will be authorized.

All types of Cavalry units
Mounted combat Engineer units
All horsed Field Artillery units
Divisional Signal units

3. The allowance of horses when a single unit is located at an armory is as follows:

All Cavalry troops —32 horses

Squadron Hd Dets —10 horses
Mt Combat Engr Co—16 horses
Gun Batteries F.A.—32 horses
Brigade and regimental Hd. Batteries, service batteries, Battalion HQ Dets and Combat Trains and Ammunition Trains of horsed Field Artillery —16 horses.

Divisional Signal Companies — 11 horses.

4. When two Field Artillery units other than gun batteries are located at an armory an increase of 16 horses will be allowed and when four are so located an increase of 32 will be allowed.

5. No more than 96 horses will be issued to any one armory.

6. Horses issued to several units at one armory should be divided up as equitably as possible among all the units at that armory so that each unit may have its own horses for use outside of drill periods. All horses at an armory will be under the control of the senior officer assigned to the units at that armory and under his supervi-

Dues

A reminder that the membership year begins in February each year. If you have not paid your dues yet, please do so as soon as possible. Your dues are tax deductible.

Annual dues are \$10 per individual, \$250 for life membership, and \$1500 for corporate membership. Please make checks payable to NGMMNJ, INC and mail to:

**National Guard Militia Museum
Membership
PO Box 277
Sea Girt, NJ 08736**

sion will be pooled for use of the different units during their drill periods. The will also be pooled for the purpose of employing caretakers.

7. The method of distributing the 2445 horses will be announced at a later date.

- CW4 Judith McCabe